WE CLAIM:

1. A method of binding the imidazoline receptor, comprising:

contacting a bis-benzene to said imidazoline receptor in an amount effective to bind to said receptor, wherein said bis-benzene contains at least one amidine group.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein said contacting step is carried out *in vitro*.

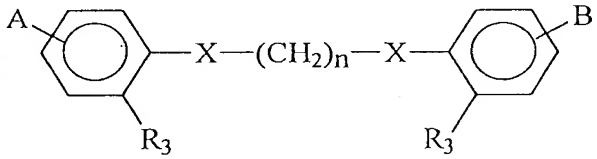
3. A method according to claim 1, wherein said contacting step is carried out *in vitro* with cells that express said imidazoline receptor.

4. A method according to claim 1, wherein said contacting step is carried out *in vitro* with a cell-free preparation comprising said imidazoline receptor.

5. A method according to claim 1, wherein said contacting step is carried out *in vivo*.

6. A method according to claim 1, wherein said contacting step is carried out *in vivo* by administering said compound to a subject afflicted with a disease state which is alleviable by treatment with a compound having high selectivity and affinity for the imidazoline receptor site.

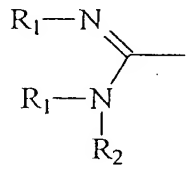
7. A method according to claim 1, wherein said bis-benzene has the formula I:



(I)

wherein:

A and B are each independently selected from the group consisting of H, loweralkyl, oxyalkyl, nitro, amino, aminoalkyl, halo, hydroxy, carboxy, and compounds of formula (i):



(i)

subject to the proviso that at least one of A and B is a compound of formula (i);

R_1 and R_2 are each independently selected from the group consisting of H, loweralkyl, oxyalkyl, alkoxyalkyl, cyloalkyl, aryl, hydroxyalkyl, aminoalkyl and alkylaminoalkyl; or two R_1 group on the same amidine group together represent –(CH_2)m- wherein m is 2, 3, or 4;

R_3 is H, loweralkyl, oxyalkyl, alkoxyalkyl, hydroxyalkyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aminoalkyl, alkylaminoalkyl or halogen;

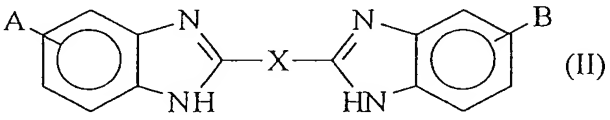
n is from 2 to 6; and

X is O, NH, or S;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

8. A method according to claim 7, wherein R_1, R_2 and R_3 are H; wherein X is O; and wherein n is 5.

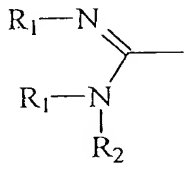
9. A method according to claim 1, wherein said bis-benzene has the formula II:



(II)

wherein:

A and B are each independently selected from the group consisting of H, loweralkyl, oxyalkyl, nitro, amino, aminoalkyl, halo, hydroxy, carboxy, and compounds of formula (i):



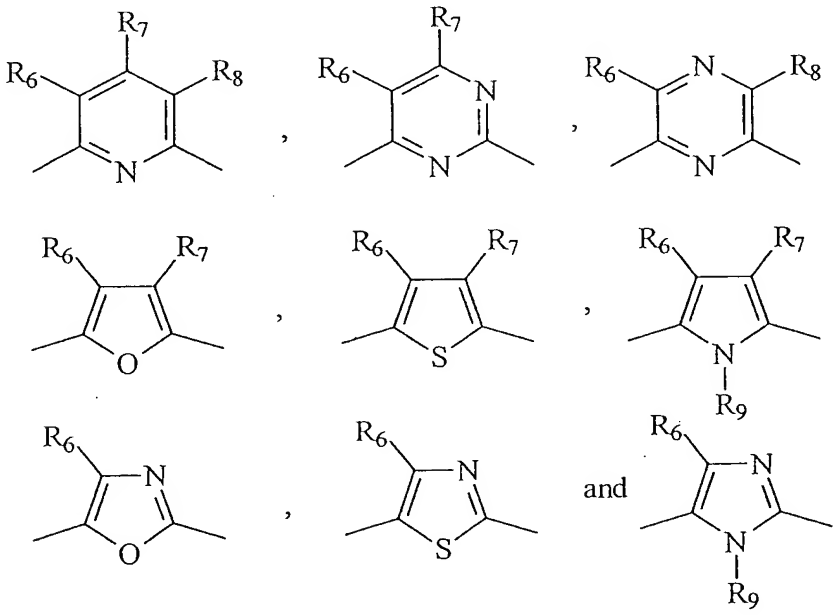
(i)

subject to the proviso that at least one of A and B is a compound of formula (i);

R_1 and R_2 are each independently selected from the group consisting of H, loweralkyl, oxyalkyl, alkoxyalkyl, cyloalkyl, aryl, hydroxyalkyl, aminoalkyl and alkylaminoalkyl; or two R_1 group on the same amidine group together represent –(CH_2)m- wherein m is 2, 3, or 4;

R_3 is H, loweralkyl, oxyalkyl, alkoxyalkyl, hydroxyalkyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aminoalkyl, alkylaminoalkyl or halogen;

X is linear or branched, saturated or unsaturated C1-C12 alkyl containing up to 4 double bonds; or X is a heterocyclic aromatic group selected from the group consisting of:



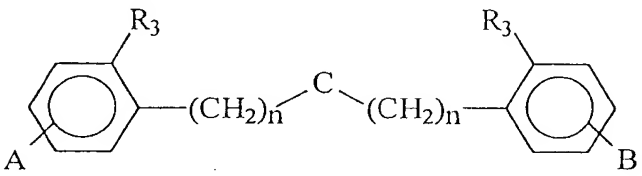
wherein

R_6, R_7, and R_8 are each independently selected from the group consisting of H, loweralkyl, halogen, oxyalkyl, oxyaryl, or oxyarylalkyl;

R_9 is hydrogen, loweralkyl, hydroxy, aminoalkyl or alkylaminoalkyl;

or the pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

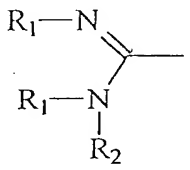
10. A method according to claim 1, wherein said bis-benzene has the formula III:



(III)

wherein:

A and B are each independently selected from the group consisting of H, loweralkyl, oxyalkyl, nitro, amino, aminoalkyl, halo, hydroxy, carboxy, and substituents of formula (i):



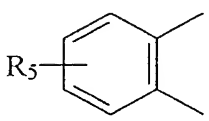
(i)

subject to the proviso that at least one of A and B is a substituent of formula (i);

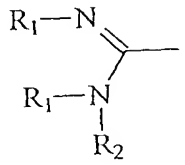
R_1 and R_2 are each independently selected from the group consisting of H, loweralkyl, oxyalkyl, alkoxyalkyl, cyloalkyl, aryl, hydroxyalkyl, aminoalkyl and alkylaminoalkyl; or two R_1 groups on the same amidine group together represent –(CH_2)m- wherein m is 2, 3, or 4;

R_3 is H, loweralkyl, oxyalkyl, alkoxyalkyl, hydroxyalkyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aminoalkyl, alkylaminoalkyl or halogen;

or two R_1 groups on the same amidine group together represent

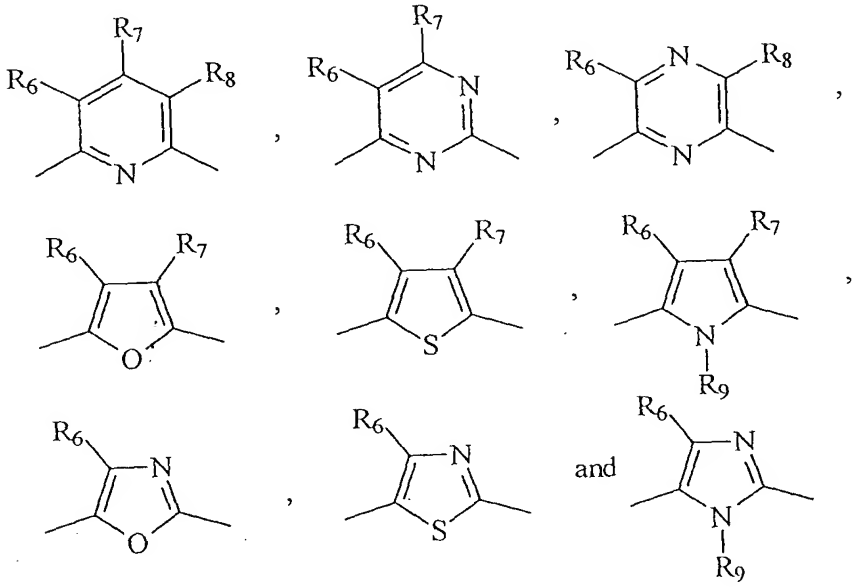


wherein R_5 is


(i)

n is an integer from O to 2; and

A is a heterocyclic aromatic group selected from the group consisting of:



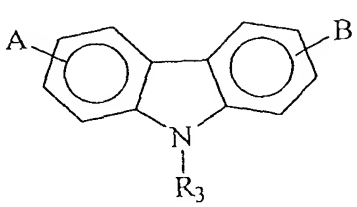
wherein

R_6, R_7, and R_8 are each independently selected from the group consisting of H, loweralkyl, halogen, oxyalkyl, oxyaryl, or oxyarylalkyl;

R_9 is hydrogen, loweralkyl, hydroxy, aminoalkyl or alkylaminoalkyl;

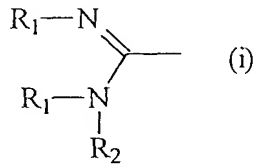
and the pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

11. A method according to claim 1, wherein said bis-benzamidine has the formula IV:


(IV)

wherein:

A and B are each independently selected from the group consisting of H, loweralkyl, oxyalkyl, nitro, amino, aminoalkyl, halo, hydroxy, carboxy, and substituents of formula (i):



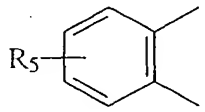
(i)

subject to the proviso that at least one of A and B is a substituent of formula (i);

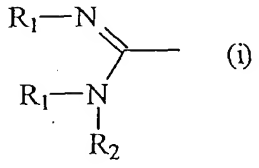
R_1 and R_2 are each independently selected from the group consisting of H, loweralkyl, oxyalkyl, alkoxyalkyl, cyloalkyl, aryl, hydroxyalkyl, aminoalkyl and alkylaminoalkyl; or two R_1 group on the same amidine group together represent $-(CH_2)m-$ wherein m is 2, 3, or 4;

R_3 is H, loweralkyl, oxyalkyl, alkoxyalkyl, hydroxyalkyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aminoalkyl, alkylaminoalkyl or halogen;

or two R_1 groups on the same amidine group together represent



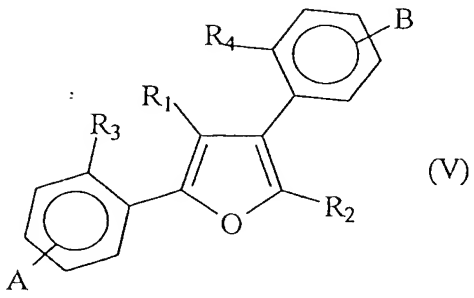
wherein R_5 is



(i)

and the pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

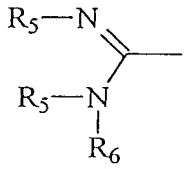
12. A method according to claim 1, said bis-benzene having the formula (V):



(V)

wherein:

A and B are each independently selected from the group consisting of H, loweralkyl, oxyalkyl, nitro, amino, aminoalkyl, halo, hydroxy, carboxy, and substituents of formula (ii):



(ii)

subject to the proviso that at least one of A and B is a substituent of formula (ii);

R_1 and R_2 are each independently selected from the group consisting of H, loweralkyl, aryl, alkylaryl, aminoalkyl, aminoaryl, halogen, oxyalkyl, oxyaryl, or oxyarylalkyl;

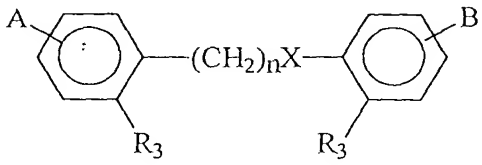
R_3 and R_4 are each independently selected from the group consisting of H, loweralkyl, oxyalkyl, alkylaryl, aryl, oxyaryl, aminoalkyl, aminoaryl, or halogen; and

each R_5 is independently selected from the group consisting of H, loweralkyl, alkoxyalkyl, hydroxyalkyl, aminoalkyl, alkylaminoalkyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, or alkylaryl or two R_5 groups together represent C_2 to C_{10} alkyl, hydroxyalkyl, or alkylene; and

R_6 is H, hydroxy, loweralkyl, alkoxyalkyl, hydroxyalkyl, aminoalkyl, alkylamino, alkylaminoalkyl, cycloalkyl, hydroxycycloalkyl, alkoxycycloalkyl, aryl, or alkylaryl;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

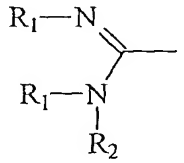
13. A method according to claim 1, wherein said bis-benzene has the formula VI:



(VI)

wherein:

A and B are each independently selected from the group consisting of H, loweralkyl, oxyalkyl, nitro, amino, aminoalkyl, halo, hydroxy, carboxy, and substituents of formula (i):



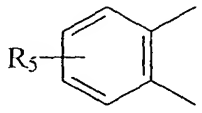
(i)

subject to the proviso that at least one of A and B is a substituent of formula (i);

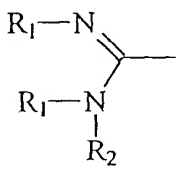
R_1 and R_2 are each independently selected from the group consisting of H, loweralkyl, oxyalkyl, alkoxyalkyl, cyloalkyl, aryl, hydroxyalkyl, aminoalkyl and alkylaminoalkyl; or two R_1 group on the same amidine group together represent $-(CH_2)m-$ wherein m is 2, 3, or 4;

R_3 is H, loweralkyl, oxyalkyl, alkoxyalkyl, hydroxyalkyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aminoalkyl, alkylaminoalkyl or halogen;

or two R_1 groups on the same amidine group together represent



wherein R_5 is



(i)

X is O, S or NH;

n is an integer from 1 to 8;

and the pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

14. A method of identifying imidazoline receptor binding agents, comprising the steps of:

providing a library of bis-benzene compounds, said bis-benzene compound containing at least one amidine group; and

screening said library for compounds that bind to said imidazoline receptor.

15. A method according to claim 14, wherein said library is a combinatorial library.

16. A method according to claim 14, wherein said bis-benzene compounds are immobilized on a solid support.